

GRACE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

ARTICLES OF FAITH

The following tenets are a summary of what we believe and are not meant to be complete or exhaustive.

The Bible

We believe that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” written by holy men as they “were moved by the Holy Spirit.” We therefore believe that the whole Bible (66 books) is without error in the original recording of this divine revelation and has absolute and complete authority in matters of faith and conduct. (2 Timothy 3:15–17; 2 Peter 1:21)

The Godhead

There is one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person of the Triunity is equally God but yet each is a separate person who takes on distinct and unique roles when dealing with mankind. (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10–11; Matthew 3:16–17; John 4:24; 10:30; Romans 1:1–4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4–6; Titus 3:4–6)

The Person of Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Triunity and eternal Son of God, became fully man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, in order that He might reveal God to mankind and redeem sinful man through His death, burial, and resurrection. He is now seated at the right hand of God in heaven. (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Mark 16:19; Luke 1:32–35; John 1:1–2, 14; Romans 1:3–4; 2 Corinthians 5:19–21; Galatians 4:4–5; Ephesians 1:20; Philippians 2:6–9; Colossians 1:15–19; Hebrews 4:15)

The Holy Spirit

We believe the Holy Spirit is a person, who convicts the world of sin, and who regenerates, baptizes, seals, indwells, enlightens, and empowers the believer. (John 16:8; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:13; Ephesians 1:13, 17–18; 3:16; Titus 3:5)

Mankind's Natural Condition

We believe that man was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), but that in Adam's sin, the race fell (Romans 3:23; 5:12), inherited a sinful nature, became alienated from God (Ephesians 2:1–3, 12), and is totally unable to please God in this lost condition (Romans 3:9–12; 8:7–8). All men are thus, by nature, dead in trespasses and sins, and are therefore totally unable to do anything pleasing to God. Sin separates man from God. (Ephesians 2:1–3)

Salvation

God justifies (declares not guilty) ungodly sinners by His grace, made possible by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, through each individual's declaration of faith. Complete salvation, forgiveness, and justification are given as an unconditional gift of God through our faith in Jesus Christ completely apart from any work of our own. This gift of salvation is given to us when we simply believe and put our complete trust in the person of Jesus Christ and His completed work on the cross. (Romans 3:20–28; 5:1–9; Ephesians 2:8–9; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4)

Eternal Security

All believers are eternally secure in Jesus Christ. Eternal life begins at the point of believing (Romans 8:1–2, 29–39; Ephesians 1:13–14; 4:30; Colossians 3:1–4; Philippians 1:6).

Baptism

All saved persons have been made members of the Body of Christ by one spiritual baptism into Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). By that one baptism

every member of the body of Christ is identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3–6; Colossians 2:11–12). This one spiritual baptism is the only baptism needed for salvation. However, we do provide water baptism for those who desire to make a public testimony of their spiritual change.

The Lord's Supper

We believe that Christians are to remember Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection by observing the Lord's Supper where believers are encouraged to partake of the elements of grape juice and bread as symbols of Christ's blood and body. Scripture does not specify how often this is to be done so we have the freedom to decide as a congregation (1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

Our Walk

By reason of Christ's victory over sin and of His indwelling Spirit, all saved people may, and should, experience deliverance from the power of sin by obedience to Ephesians 4:23. When we live in the state of renewing the mind we have put off the old nature and we have put on the new (Ephesians 4:22–24). However, we deny that man's nature of sin is ever eradicated during this life (Romans 6:6–14; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 10:2–5; Galatians 5:16–25).

As saints (literally “set-apart ones”) and members of the true Church (literally “called-out ones”) we are to maintain a Christ-honoring testimony, separate from all forms of worldliness and apostasy, and we are to demonstrate obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ and love to all men (Romans 12:1–2, 9; 2 Corinthians 6:14–18; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 6:20–21).

Family

We believe that God created and blessed the family as the foundation of society. Marriage unites one genetically defined naturally born male (man) and one genetically defined naturally born female (woman) in a lifetime commitment to each other (Genesis 2:23–24; Matthew 19:4–6; Romans 7:1–3). We believe civil unions and domestic partnerships do not constitute a biblical marriage nor do we acknowledge them as such. Common law marriages are recognized as legal marriages in the state of Texas. The marriage relationship is biblically the only legitimate and accepted sexual relationship (Hebrews 13:4). A husband is commanded to love and provide for his wife, as Christ loves the Church (Ephesians 5:25). A wife is commanded to respect and submit to her husband as the Church submits to Christ (Ephesians 5:22–33). Marriage is designed by God to be a monogamous lifelong commitment between a man and a woman (Matthew 19:4–6; Romans 7:1–3; 1 Corinthians 7:10–11). Children are a gift from God and are fully human from conception (Psalm 127:3; 139:13–16; Luke 1:41, 44; Exodus 21:22–25). Parents are to train their children by modeling a godly life, teaching them the Scriptures, disciplining them in love, and providing them a resource of wisdom and counsel (Deuteronomy 6:4–7; Proverbs 1:8–9; 13:24; 22:6; Ephesians 6:4).

Divorce

The Mosaic Law allows for divorce and remarriage (Deuteronomy 24:1–4). Jesus, in expanding on the Mosaic Law states that divorce was possible only in the case of adultery (Matthew 5:32). We recognize Jesus was speaking to the nation of Israel under Law (Matthew 15:24; Galatians 4:4). The Apostle Paul gives instructions for believers today. We are to remain married, however, if you do divorce, remarriage is permissible (1 Corinthians 7:1–16). Divorce is hated by God (Malachi 2:16) but God allows divorce because He knows the heart of mankind. We do not live under the rule of the Mosaic Law (Romans 6:14). There is no instruction stating that those who divorce and remarry are disqualified from serving in the church.

The Church

The Church is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:4–5; Ephesians 1:22–23) and functions to carry out His work, ministry, and mission while here on Earth. Its power, commissioning, and authority come from the ministry of Christ and the work of the Holy

Spirit. By God's grace the Apostle Paul preached the revelation of the mystery that every individual (Jew or Gentile) can receive salvation through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection (Ephesians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12–13). All believers automatically become members of the Church, the body of Christ, and members of each other. As such, we are to look out for each other's needs. (Romans 12:10; Ephesians 4:25; Philippians 1:1–4)

Mission

We believe the primary mission of the local church concerns the spiritual, physical, and emotional needs of its members. We are to build up and edify one another, strengthening and encouraging each other in the Lord. Preaching and teaching of sound doctrine is critical in order for believers to understand what God's will is and give them the tools for living a victorious Christian life. Those who are trained in sound doctrine will be better prepared to effectively reach out to the unsaved with the message of reconciliation. (Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 4:1–3, 32; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 5:14–21)

Resurrection

Jesus Christ was resurrected bodily from the dead (Luke 24:39), and He will raise all of the saved to everlasting glory and, at the end of the age, He will raise all of the lost to everlasting condemnation (Acts 24:15). The Church, the body of Christ, will be the first to be resurrected at the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:22–24). Then, according to Israel's prophetic program, there will be a resurrection unto life for those who have believed outside this special dispensation of grace (Revelation 20:5–6) and finally a resurrection unto death for all unbelievers since creation (Revelation 20:11–15; Daniel 12:2).

Future Events

The rapture of the Church "which is His body," and the second coming of Christ are two distinct events, both pre-millennial and unrelated to each other. He will come first to receive the members of His body to Himself "in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; Philippians 3:20–21; Titus 2:13–14; 1 Corinthians 15:51–53). This rapture marks the end of the Church age and the resumption of God dealing with the nation of Israel under Law. Following a seven-year Tribulation (the time of Jacob's trouble) Jesus Christ will return to reign on Earth for 1,000 years from Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:4, 9; Acts 1:10–11; Revelation 19:11–16; 20:4–6). After the Millennium, God will judge all unbelievers, who will then be cast into the Lake of Fire along with Satan. Heaven and Earth will be recreated (the new Heavens and new Earth) for the eternal state when the effects of sin will be reversed and where all believers from all ages will dwell (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21:1).

The first resurrection, the resurrection unto life (Revelation 20:5), happens at the Second coming. The second resurrection, the resurrection unto death (Daniel 12:2), happens at the Great White Throne judgment following the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:11–14). The rapture of the Church is a special resurrection which was a mystery revealed after God made known to mankind the first and second resurrections (1 Corinthians 15:51–52).

State of the Unsaved Dead

The Scripture in no place extends the hope of salvation to the unsaved dead, but instead reveals that they will ever continue to exist in a state of conscious suffering. The teachings of universalism, probation after death, and annihilation of the unsaved dead are opposed by us as being thoroughly unscriptural and dangerous doctrines (Luke. 13:23–28; John 3:36; Ephesians 5:5; Philippians 3:19; Colossians 3:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 14:11; 20:14–15).